

# Idaho Transportation Department

## *News Release*

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Contacts: Darla Christiansen  
Public Information Specialist  
(208) 334-8874

Mary Hunter  
Office of Traffic and Highway Safety  
(208) 334-8112 (office)  
(208) 841-7119 (mobile)

***Editor's note:*** Reporters are invited to visit the Highway Safety Summit. Speakers will be available for interviews during session breaks (10-10:15 a.m., 11:40 a.m.-12:50 p.m., and 2:50-3:05 p.m.). An agenda is attached.

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Safety officials, law enforcement gather at Highway Safety Summit Thursday (April 14)**

BOISE – Nearly 200 safety professionals and law enforcement officials will gather in Boise Thursday (April 14) for the Idaho Highway Safety Summit. The summit is sponsored by the Idaho Transportation Department's Office of Traffic and Highway Safety (OTHS) and will be at the DoubleTree Riverside Hotel, 2900 Chinden Blvd. from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The event will focus on ways to prevent fatal and serious injuries, and associated costs, resulting from traffic crashes. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 4-34.

Nationally recognized experts will speak about traffic safety and enforcement topics such as impaired driving, aggressive driving enforcement, and safety restraints and seat belt use.

"This summit is all about saving lives," said Mark Strait of OTHS. "Aggressive driving and impaired driving are our biggest behavioral contributors to traffic crashes in Idaho. Buckling up remains the best defense against serious injury or death for you, and your passengers, if you're involved in a crash.

"Working with law enforcement officers and highway safety partners to spread these messages is at the heart of the summit."

**- more -**

Participants will include representatives from the Idaho State Police, county sheriffs' offices and local police departments, as well as 28 other agencies and organizations involved in safety issues.

Program highlights include:

- Oregon State Patrol Trooper Michael Holloran will address issues regarding enforcement of child passenger safety laws. Idaho's new law, effective July 1, requires children through the age of 6 to be properly secured in appropriate child safety restraints.
- Chuck Hayes, International Association of Chiefs of Police, will update officers on standard field sobriety testing and drug recognition procedures.
- Sgt. John Wilson, Twin Falls Police Department, will provide an update on his department's use of unmarked cars to address aggressive driving.
- Lt. Bob Clements, Idaho State Police, will discuss the status of alcohol compliance checks to address drinking by underage drivers.
- Russ Spearman, Idaho State University, will provide attendees with an understanding of the personal and societal costs of traumatic brain injuries.

Traffic crashes are the primary cause of traumatic brain injuries in Idaho.

Every day, five Idahoans are either killed or seriously injured in traffic crashes. Society at large pays 85 percent of the medical costs for those involved in crashes. These costs are passed on to the general public through insurance premiums, taxes and increased charges for medical services.

ITD received \$435,000 in grant funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to support the upcoming *Click It, Don't Risk It!* education and enforcement campaign. The summit will serve to prepare the agencies for this and other upcoming enforcement events.